

Safety On The Road

You Need Your Space

Keeping a cushion of space between you and the next vehicle helps prevent rear-end collisions.

These collisions often occur at intersections and in heavy traffic. They can easily turn into chain-reaction accidents, with some vehicles crushed between the vehicles in front and behind them.

These are some techniques for preventing a collision with the vehicle in front of you:

- Don't follow too closely.
- Watch for these clues the vehicle in front of you is about to stop — the driver slows down or the signal lights or brake lights go on.
- Watch the traffic situation well ahead. Look for obstacles which may cause someone ahead of you to stop suddenly. Be alert for brake lights flashing well ahead of you in traffic.
- Occasionally look at the number and actions of people in the cars around you; the driver may not have his full attention on driving.
- Look for signs of road repairs or rough road surfaces which may cause another driver to slow down unexpectedly.

- Observe traffic approaching from side roads, preparing to cross your route or merge with traffic. A car cutting into your lane means drivers may have to hit the brakes.

- Look for pedestrians, including people stepping out from between parked cars.

- Watch also for pets running into the traffic.

- A ball rolling into a street probably means there will be someone right behind it.

- You may be able to see through the next vehicle's windshield to anticipate hazards. In a high truck cab, you may be able to see obstacles before the driver of the car ahead of you spots them.

Here are some ways to prevent the vehicle behind from plowing into you:

- Get rid of tailgaters. Pull off the road when it is safe to do so and let the vehicle go by.

- Check your brake lights and signal lights regularly so you know they are working correctly. Touching your brakes activates your brake lights and makes your vehicle more visible.

- When you know you have to stop, start slowing down well in advance rather than braking at the last moment.

- When approaching a cross street, stop a car-length short of the intersection or crosswalk. This is to prevent you from being pushed into the intersection if your vehicle is struck from the rear. It will also give you some room to take evasive action if you see a vehicle approaching too quickly from behind.

- If you must stop suddenly, watch your mirror to make sure the vehicles behind you are stopping too. Flash your brake lights to alert the other driver.

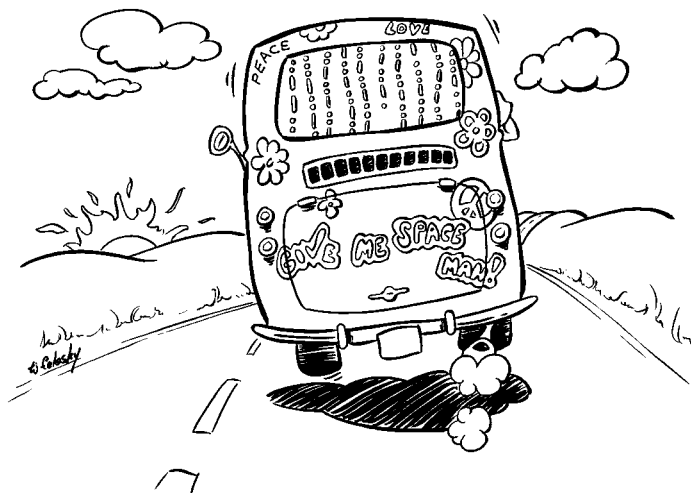
- Avoid unnecessary stops. Never stop in a traffic lane unless absolutely necessary. In case of a breakdown, coast to the shoulder of the road. Parking improperly can cause rear-end collisions.

- Be more careful to prevent rear-end collisions when road or weather conditions increase the stopping distance. Keep your vehicle under control at all times.

Keep plenty of space ahead of you and behind you to prevent rear-ender accidents. Get the big picture of traffic in front and behind to avoid collisions caused by sudden stops.

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